

By STUART EARP Wycombe Wanderers 3, Bishop's Stortford 0

AFTER FINDING a sponsor for three-clear-goal victories only last week, Wycombe Wanderers collected their first payment on Saturday when they easily overcame bottom club Bishop's Stortford at Loakes Park. In doing so the Blues became the top goalscorers in the Isthmian League Premier Division.

But although Wanderers will be £40 richer thanks to M.A.C. School of Motoring, the sponsors, there was little satisfaction from this success over a club who look doomed for relegation after picking up just three points in 15 games.

Stortford, with a new manager appointed last week, were woefully weak and to make matters worse, they were without three regular first teamers through injury. Despite that, Wanderers had to struggle for long periods and it was only a late goal that earned them their bonus.

There were several reasons for this unconvincing performance. Firstly they too, were hit by injuries which meant a reshuffled side turning out and secondly, the weather was so appalling the players did well to produce any entertainment at all.

Manager John Reardon made some drastic changes to the line-up after Tuesday's 2-0 defeat by Hayes. Farouk Quraishi and Graham Mackenzie were dropped and in came Howard Kennedy and Paul Birdseye to midfield. Steve Vass returned after injury to left back while Bob Davies wore the number two shirt. Mackenzie was made substitute.

In my view the switch of Birdseye was not a success. Paul has been right back for four or five seasons now and can rightly be regarded as one of the best in the league. The experiment of playing him in midfield has been tried before and each time he has returned to the back four. It was only Davies's versatility that made the switch possible for Bob had a fine game at right back, providing an accurate and dangerous service on the flank.

Midfield, however, was a major cause for concern. Roger Day, for all his experience, found the pace too hot on a lightning fast surface while Kennedy also tired towards the

end due to his lack of match fitness. Fortunately Stortford did not have the skill to dominate this department but against a better side, Wycombe's lack of pace would have been exposed.

Wanderers were not too happy at the back either, where Alan Phillips had a poor game. The crowd were quick to criticise whenever Wycombe took time to build their attacks from the back but one felt some sympathy for the man with the ball as there was little movement up front.

HALF VOLLEY

Having said that, however, it was again disappointing to see the ball played back 20 or 30 yards just as attacks were looking dangerous.

Wanderers soon began to put Stortford under pressure and Dylan Evans had two good chances to score before he eventually put them ahead after 21 minutes. Latching onto Tony Horseman's through ball he beat one defender and took the ball around goalkeeper Terry Dickinson before slotting home.

Two minutes later Dylan laid on the second goal when he raced to the bye-line and then cleverly cut back to send over a cross. Kennedy caught the ball on the half volley and sent it just inside the post.

At this stage Stortford looked as if they would be over-run. They had nothing up front to test keeper Peter Spittle and it was one way traffic towards their net. But the pressure eased as Wanderers lost their way in midfield. There should have been more goals especially as Davies maintained a string of superb crosses from the right.

There was one amusing moment just before the break when Spittle chased back to field Vass's back pass. The ball went for a corner and Peter was travelling so fast he almost disappeared over an advertising board. It was about his most dangerous moment of the day!

Wycombe lacked urgency at the start of the new half but slowly their superiority began to tell as they began to amass a stream of corners, building up 15 in all during the game. From one of them Keith Mead headed against an upright and then Horseman hit the outside of the woodwork. A fine volley from Kennedy looked a certain goal until Dickinson stuck out a hand to deflect the ball away.

To their credit, Stortford kept fighting until the end and indeed, they had their best spell in the last 20 minutes when they strung some neat moves together. Spittle had to be on his toes to keep out shots from Jim Chatterway and Bob Jenkins but with only a few minutes left the Blues sewed it up with their third goal.

Phillips, who had seen two efforts blocked on the line earlier, suffered the same fate from a corner but Horseman cracked home the half clearance to complete the scoring.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; R. Davies, K. Mead, A. Phillips, S. Vass; H. Kennedy, R. Day, P. Birdseye; A. Horseman, D. Harris, D. Evans. Sub: G. Mackenzie (not used).

STORTFORD: T. Dickinson; P. Muggeridge, J. Chatterway, A. Tuddenham, R. Seary (Sub: J. Oakley 82 mins.); J. Neill, M. Coe, K. Moore, A. Melvin; B. Jenkins, D. Thake.

Referee: D. O'Leary (Dagenham).
Half-time: 2-0. **Goalscorers:** Evans (21), Kennedy (23), Horseman (67).

Attendance: 950.

Latest table

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION (up to and including 9/10/77)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	13	10	2	1	25	9	32
Tooting	14	10	1	3	21	11	31
Wycombe	15	9	2	4	28	15	29
Leath'head	13	7	4	2	25	11	25
Staines	13	7	4	2	18	13	25
Hitchin	14	7	3	4	21	17	24
Sutton	12	7	2	3	16	10	23
Carshalton	12	6	4	2	21	12	22
Hendon	15	6	4	5	23	20	22
Dagenham	15	6	3	6	24	24	21
Barking	12	6	1	5	20	16	19
Hayes	12	5	4	3	12	9	19
Boreham	12	5	2	5	17	20	17
Waltham	11	4	3	4	13	15	15
Croydon	12	4	2	6	13	15	14
King'sian	14	2	4	8	15	22	10
Tilbury	12	2	4	6	15	22	10
Southall	13	2	4	7	13	20	10
Slough	10	2	2	6	12	20	8
Woking	12	2	1	9	10	21	7
Ley stone	11	1	3	7	11	23	6
Stortford	15	0	3	12	14	40	3

Playing tonight

FLACKWELL Heath are in action tonight (Tuesday) when they travel to Hungerford Town in the Hellenic League Premier Division. Also playing tonight are a Marlow XI, who take on Rockets of Slough.

WYCOMBE Wanderers meet old rivals Oxford City tonight (Tuesday) for their first ever outing in the Shaw and Kilburn Floodlit League. The match was hastily arranged yesterday as the Blues were without a midweek fixture.

The game will give manager John Reardon the opportunity to play most of his squad members and also introduce a newcomer in Richard Strong, who has been playing for Flackwell Heath this season. Strong is a centre back.

Farouk Quraishi and John Priestley are likely to return to the side while John Maskell is expected to play his first game

for three weeks in goal. One man missing is Billy Roberts, who is on holiday.

Tonight's game is most welcome as the manager will want to keep his players in trim for Saturday's 'crunch' Isthmian League game at Enfield, current leaders of the Premier Division. This is a change of fixture as the Blues were scheduled to be playing at Walthamstow.

Oxford City were relegated to Division One of the league two years ago. So far this season they are well placed and on Saturday they overcame Bromsgrove 2-1 in the F.A. Cup.